

10 England. Charles II. King

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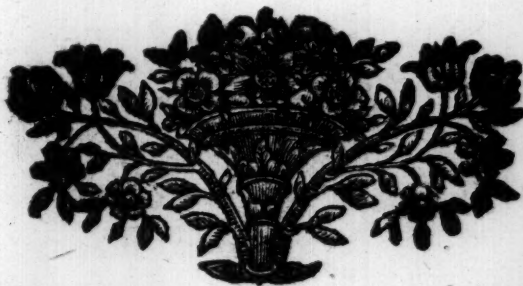
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With Respect to

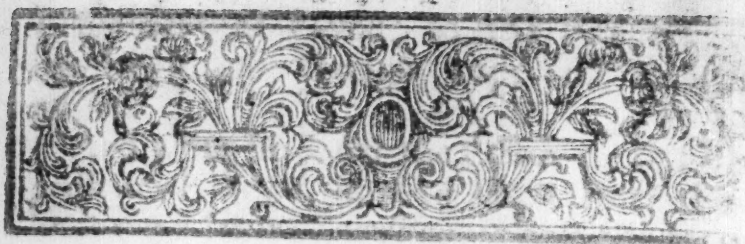
*I R E L A N D.*

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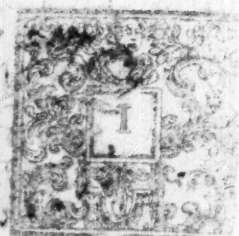
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THE  
C A S E  
OF THE  
T E S T, &c.



Think it will be allowed, that in a quiet peaceable State the Disturbers of this Settlement have most to answer for the Consequences of such an Attempt; and it is certain, the *Dissenters* are the Aggressors in this Dispute.

This Nation has now been *thirty Tears* easy and happy, and in the Progress of these Years still easier and happier, under such  
*Limit-*

*Limitations* of Favour to the Subjects, as the Legislature thought expedient then to impose.

And what has been the Effect of this Expediency? Why, in these *thirty Years* there has been a larger Accession, in this Kingdom, from the *Nonconformists* to the Church Communion, than ever was known before this Expedient.

Many *considerable Dissenters* have come, and daily do come over to the Church Communion; the Children of *considerable Dissenters*, even in the Life-time of their Parents, have been and are brought up in the Church Communion; and such *Dissenters* as are distinguished for their Capacities to serve the Publick, readily comply, and conform to the Church Communion, upon their being advanced to such Trusts. All these are confessed Matter of Facts, evident and present to our Observation.

And what is particularly to be regarded in this happy Disposition to *Conformity*, you observe that those who have conformed, are Persons of *Fortune, Education, and good Abilities*. And though a full Conformity is so far from being effected, that there are great Numbers of inferior Condition, deriving their Education and Prejudices from *Scotland*, who therefore continue averse to our Church

Com-

Communion; yet those of the best Condition of Fortune, who are now *Non-conformists* among us, seem to be best disposed to conform; the Violence of Prejudice is every Day wearing off, and as they grow more convinced of the Unreasonableness of Separation, and that nothing is sinful in Church Communion, but that every thing is appointed, taught, and executed for the Promotion of true sincere Religion; we have great Reason to hope, under the *present Limitations*, we shall soon become *one Flock under one Shepherd*: I have said under the *present Limitations*; for, under the Blessing of God, I ascribe a great deal of Success to these *Limitations*, not as *they* force Men into a Compliance with the established Religion; but as they *lead* Men to consider the Merit of the Difference between *Conformity* and *Non-conformity*. For it is reasonable, and charitable to suppose, that many a Person would never have weighed and considered this Difference, if these *Limitations* had not been laid in their Way; and it is just and fair to allow a particular Share of Credit to those Persons, who thus *conform* upon Conviction; as it is an Argument of clear and strong Reasoning, against the Byass and Partiality of Prejudice. In such a Case, the *Limitations of the Law* are not a Reason for *Conformity*; but they



they are the *Occasion* of considering the Reasonableness of it; and this *Occasion* generally leads very happily to Conviction, in favour of the reasonable Establishment.

According to this Representation of the Temper and Disposition of the most considerable *Dissenters* in Ireland, one would think that they were in a fair Way to full *Conformity*.—Whence then arises so eager an Attempt at this Time, for repealing this offensive *Test* of the Church Communion?

This is a Question that well deserves an Answer. And as, I hope, I have not offended in any thing I have hitherto observed in this Paper, I would not willingly offend here, *Let Truth then be told without Offence*. The Ministers of *Dissenting Meetings*, as it is easy to apprehend from this Representation, are likely to be exposed to great Distress; for their Maintenance, as the Congregation withdraws their Subscriptions, must of Consequence fail; and it is a reasonable Alarm on their Side, to foresee this Distress. Accordingly it is by every Body observed, that these Ministers are, on this Occasion, the Agents, Solicitors, and Writers for the Repeal; they are the Persons principally stirring and active in Applications to Commoners, to Lords, nay to Lord Bishops; and if we will believe the Credit they would give themselves, even

to higher Persons. Now, pray what can affect *them* so strongly in this Debate, but the Apprehension of losing their Subscriptions, and a Diminution of their Income? For as to the Interests of these importunate solliciting Gentlemen, the Continuance of the *Test* does no way affect them, otherwise than as it lessens their Support, by becoming an Occasion of lessening their Congregations. For I know not how to imagine, with a *Person* who has wrote upon this Subject, that the *Dissenting Teachers* have a Design, by the *Repeal*, to hold Civil Offices in *Commendam*. No, the Truth is; the Effect of the *present Limitations* has lessened, and the *Continuance of it* will every Day lessen their Congregations; and every Body sees what they have Reason to apprehend from the Consequence of such a sinking Diminution; for I imagine, they have no better Challenge than other People, to say with the Apostle, *I seek not yours, but you.*

But if this Tryal of a Church Parliament is only raised from the Sollicitations of *Dissenting Ministers*, what can be the Consequence? Why, the Consequence of their Application to Gentlemen, who know the happy Effects of the *present Limitations*, will be, to consider this Attempt as the last languid Effort of their expiring Interest, among those

those who have supported the *Separation*; and are less disposed to support it; and on this Foot, I am confident, they could not engage *ten Votes* in the present House.

How comes it to pass then, that People apprehend they have a larger Number in their Interest? It is said, with Assurance, by themselves, that they have *Seventy* secure, in Favour of the Repeal; I think this too surprising to be believed, and I have argued against the Possibility of it; that a Parliament of *Ireland*, after *Thirty Years* Experience of the happy Effects of their *own Law*, should now think of *repealing* it. If the Argument had been urged, as it is said to have been urged in a Session or two after the passing it, the Debate might run doubtful, whether it were fit and prudent to be continued; but after so long Experience of its Effects, *successively* and *continually* seen more and more favourable to compose and to unite the *Protestant Interest* of this Kingdom, by the firmest Union of *Church Conformity*; after such Experience of Union, to repeal such a Law, would look like a Surgeon taking off the Bandage of a broken Limb, kindly healing and uniting, but not fully united and knit, and so the Cure and Labour of a Month may be defeated in an Hour.

With



With these Reflections I gave my Mind rest, that nothing unskillful could happen from an experienced Hand. But still these *Seventy* secure Votes were urged against all my Reasoning and Resolution; and, at last, to enlighten and to enlarge my Understanding, I was directed to look farther than our little Home, not to draw my Conclusions from what I observed here; I was told, that my Reasoning was drawn from the narrow Condition of what I saw about me; and therefore, for my Information I was sent to a *News-Writer* of great Credit and Confidence, who was pleased to let *Us* People of *Ireland* know, that the *Test* was to be repealed here, in order to make Provisions for many *Scotch Presbyterians*, thereby to strengthen us against the Power of Popery; and this I was told, had been published about two Months ago. This is News, indeed, to me that does not attend Coffee-Houses; and it leads me to abate of my Wonder, that the Solicitors on this Side the Water have taken up the Attempt with so much Mettle and Alacrity. It is no Wonder they should earnestly labour to bring in such Succours, which will effectually keep up the Separation, and in a good measure answer their Purposes: But these babbling *News-Writers* do not always entertain us upon certain Information; though

though a Hint from the other Side the Water, has great Influence upon *Us*, and ought to have great Influence here from good Authority; because the Interests of them and us are interwoven, and what is advantageous or detrimental must affect both, though in different Degrees; yet I may take Leave to tell this *News-Writer*, that he is a hasty confident Vender of such Politicks, before he has some Authority from the Parliament of *Ireland*, to furnish him with Materials for such a Report.

It is a Royal Goodness of his Majesty, to continue to call a Parliament in this Kingdom, to advise what shall be fit to be enacted, or repealed, for the Benefit of the Crown and of the Subject; and as the Representatives of every Kingdom, are necessarily to be allowed the most capable of advising what is fit to be *enacted* or *repealed*, for the Purposes both of Government and Liberty, and the common Benefit of the whole, it is an affronting Presumption, that a *Scribler of News* should attempt to prescribe to the great Council of a Nation: For, setting aside *his* low Pretensions to prescribe to us, should the Wisdom of greater Councils, not entirely acquainted with the happy Success of the present Limitations, think fit to recommend such a Repeal of this Test as is

now

now contended for; yet every Body that is acquainted with the Justness and Moderation of his Majesty's Government, will be easily perswaded, that when the Defence of this *limiting Law*, with its most useful Consequences in Possession, and more useful in Prospect, are represented, such a Representation must for ever put an End to these Sollicitations of Art and Device, to keep up a *Separation*; which would otherwise speedily conclude in a common Union, and Agreement of *Loyalty and Religion*.

Since Insinuations of publick Interest are carried so far, if they are so far carried as to have any Influence in the Councils of *England*, it is very happy for this Kingdom, that we have a *Chief Governor*, who has all the Capacities of Discernment, and Goodness, and Integrity, to represent the Condition of this Dispute with Fidelity, to the Honour and Interest of his Majesty, and our Welfare, which is inseparable from his Majesty's Interest. Our Governor has hitherto observed us an *uniting People*; and it is the Wish of every Church-man, that he may preside over us till we are, under his prudent Administration, *entirely united*.

With these Apprehensions, I hoped the *News Writer*, and his *Scotch Colony*, must necessarily be defeated; for surely the Argument

ment for strengthening the Protestant Interest, by such Means, as must inevitably weaken, disunite, and revive the Separation of Protestants, can never be approved of in common Policy.

But here I was told I drew too hasty a Conclusion; there was another Reason in reserve, stronger than any Thing I had yet answered; Why the *Test* must be repealed; which was, that the *Dissenters* of Great Britain insisted upon it, as a necessary Condition of their Interest at this Juncture of Affairs, which they thought pretty critical. This reserved Reason is truly important, and deserves to be carefully weighed.

Are these threatening *Dissenters* then so little affected with Gratitude to the Legislature? Is their Patience already worn out under a free Toleration; which, not long ago, was all they desired for their Conscientious Scruples? This affords some Notice, that the old *Leaven* is not quite sweetened in their Hearts; such fresh Demands are apt to call to our Remembrance, what we have shewn our selves willing to forget. But, to pass by Notices of this Kind, I cannot raise any Apprehensions to my self from this *Threatening*, at any Juncture, as the Laws now stand; I hope, they that make these Threats will find themselves too inconsiderable to disturb

disturb the Government, where they make them; and the Force of these Threats must abate and become ten Thousand Times less here; for no Reasoning can be more obvious than this, that if they should be able to disunite and break our Peace here, as the Laws now lays them under Limitations, what may they not threaten and effect, when these Limitations are removed? For, such a Concession admits them into greater legal Power; and what will be the Effect of greater Power, but to make greater Demands? Then ensues one Repeal upon another, till our very Constitution is repealed.

The Attempt seems very daring in smooth Address; we may already hear the Arms clashing in the *Trojan Horse*; the impending Danger is *here*, the Forces will pour upon us, for *England* is guarded by the Fundamental Securities of the *Act of Union*; so that to break down our Wall by the Concession of this *Repeal*, exposes us to a perpetual Separation, by a perpetual Succession of such Persons as are averse to the Peace we now enjoy.

I imagine there are few *Dissenters* now among us, that would not, in a little Time, lament the Consequences of such a Concession. Here I return again to my Rest; I place my Confidence, under God, in the  
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Wisdom and Prudence of our Legislature; they sufficiently experience our Happiness under our present Laws, and they will, as the Guardians of our Happiness, preserve it.

The *Facts* and *Arguments* of this Paper, are easy to every one's Observation, they are drawn from such Evidence as we see, and must foresee. I have not taken in the Consideration of *Civil Rights*, and the *Abuse of the Sacrament* for a Test; because they are too obvious to need a Confutation. For, as to Rights, does not every Body confess, that the very Nature of Society implies many Limitations; is not the Crown limited to the Protestant Line? Do not the *Dissenters* insist upon Limitations, and very properly, by refusing to admit such Persons to officiate in Holy Offices, as will not subscribe the Apostle's Creed, &c.

And as to the *Abuse of the Sacrament* in this Way; did not the *Dissenters* offer and desire, that the receiving the Sacrament in their Communion, might be esteemed a sufficient Test. This is confessed and publick; and would not the Abuse, if any, be as great, if received as a Test among them, as with us? But these Observations are foreign to my Design here, where my only Con-

Concern was to shew the good Effects that  
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into a Law, and the happy Prospect of bet-  
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Concord was to have been the first of the series  
this will be produced, there is no doubt  
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